

Fig. 6. Dorsal and ventral view of a calvarium of an *Inia geoffrensis* from the Rio Apure, near San Fernando de Apure (MCN # e); J. ZAAGMAN fecit

number of data is still limited, it can be said that females with total lengths of 198, 202 and 208 cm were fullgrown, as well as males with total lengths of 208 and 228 cm. The female MUCV 1-135 (see also table) with a length of 198 cm was lactating when caught. In Delphinoidea the development of the supra-occipital crest is a useful age indication. In *Inia geoffrensis* the lateral crests formed by the latero-posterior parts of the maxillae and the frontals above the temporal fossae (see figures of the skull) can be used in the same way. Even in skulls of fullgrown specimens often some small foramina can be found in the supra-occipital above the foramen magnum. The number and location of those small foramina is subject to variation.

CALDWELL (1966) in his preliminary report on the morphological variation in *Inia geoffrensis*, concludes that within the sole species a complex of as many as three subspecies may be recognized. From what we have seen of material from other areas, we share his opinion. Although the Amazon and Orinoco River systems are in contact with each other (see map), we do not know whether this anastomosis permits a steady exchange of genetic material. It is therefore conceivable that on theoretical grounds only the species must be divided into two subspecies. Awaiting the final results of the study by CALDWELL, and in view of the paucity of our data, we refrain, however, from drawing conclusions concerning the taxonomic status of the freshwater dolphins in Venezuela.

The dimensions of some skulls of *Inia geoffrensis* caught in the Apure river near

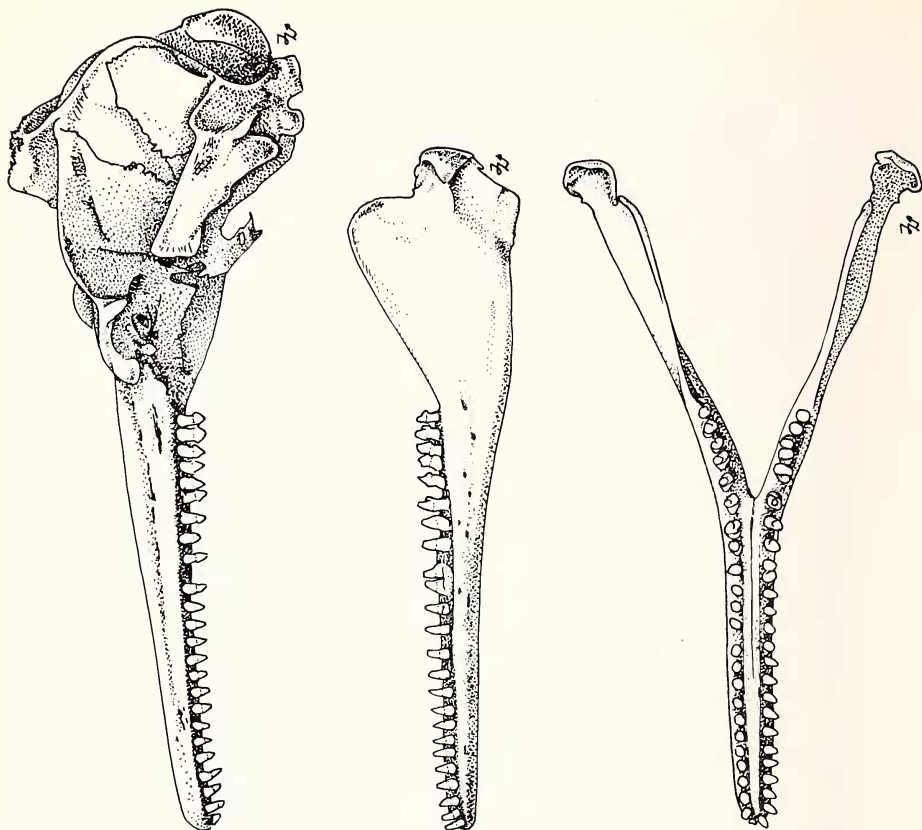


Fig. 7. Lateral view of a skull and dorsal view of the lower jaw of an *Inia geoffrensis* from the Rio Apure near San Fernando de Apur (MCN # e); J. ZAAGMAN fecit

San Fernando de Apure (see map) are given in the table. The mandible MCN 521 is the one found on Isla de Margarita. The condylobasal length of the skull of that animal must have been about 466 mm. The external measurements of nine freshwater dolphins caught near San Fernando de Apure will be published by TREBBAU (in press), together with notes on their behaviour in the wild and in captivity. The external aspect of some *Inias* caught in the Rio Apure is shown in figs. 4 and 5. As up till now only skulls of *Inia geoffrensis* from the Amazon River system are depicted in publications, we thought it useful to publish the drawings of a specimen from Venezuela (Rio Apure; MCN # e) made by Mr. J. ZAAGMAN.

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Summary

Preliminary notes are published on the occurrence and distribution of the freshwater dolphin *Inia geoffrensis* in Venezuela. Some data on their biology and the dimensions of some skulls are added.